

Review: Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, *Did God Become Man?*, Rabwah, Riyadh, Islamic Propagation Office in Rabwah, 2007

Pages: 29

Worthless Polemic Against Christianity

Dr. Philips earned his Ph. D. in Islamic theology and is reportedly currently *persona non grata* in Germany, having been banned since April, 2011.

He employs a variety of techniques in this short tractate targeting the incarnation of Christ: evolutionary theory, mixing Hindu and Christian theology and illogical argumentation.

His hypothesis begins with evolutionary biology in suggesting a biological design for belief in God.

Archaeological evidence is cited as support for God's existence, though perhaps *man's belief* in God's existence was meant.

A lack of understanding in sound science is shown. Ideas like the 'God spot' (a hypothesised built-in Darwinian adaptation into the brain's electrical circuitry), and atheists having potentially a 'differently configured neural circuit' seem to qualify¹. Abu seems to subscribe to the false 'Theory' of Evolution.²

On pp. 9-10 the anthropological theory of monotheism is described then rejected, i.e. it evolved from polytheism. He suggests man's innate belief means polytheism would have devolved from monotheism.³

There isn't much delay before the answer to the book is assumed; "God became man" is a belief "which defies all logic and reason" (p. 10). No logical argument is provided, only a non-sequitur of what Ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman pagans believed.

The main straw man built up is application of Hinduistic theology to

Christianity. For maximum effect it is invoked before the claim of Christ's divinity is discussed, e.g. the chapter "God Becomes His Creatures" on Hindu *avatars* directly precedes "God Becomes One Man" on Christ as the incarnate Word. The latter 'exegetes' John 1.1,14 by taking the word *λογος* and imagining a route from Heraclites (540-480 B.C.), to Aristotle, the Stoics, then Philo (50 A.D.) of Alexandria⁴.

Λογος became a 'transcendental principle' which according to the author was the reason why the concepts of original sin and divine sacrifice were invented. The author likely has in mind Roman Catholic dogma rather than Biblical Christianity.

In "Men Become God" a straw man of Mormon-type theology is introduced. Greek mysticism and Islamic sufism are outlined as evidence of the heretical belief a man could become God.

In "Why?", the answer to the previous straw men as to ancient people's belief God and man were the same is reached; they couldn't understand the concept of *creatio ex nihilo*! This may apply to Hindus, however, Genesis 1.1 is sufficient for a basic understanding of Christianity, that God is not panentheistic.

In "Did God Become Man?" 'logic' is invoked a number of times. This is the only part of the work where arguments are laid out in an attempt to invalidate Christ's deity:

I) Meaning of God Argument

Major Premise: The basic meaning of the term "God" is contradicted by the minor premise.

Minor Premise: The concept of God becoming man contradicts the major premise.

Conclusion: God did not become a man.

This is blatantly circular and warrants no consideration.

II) God Cannot Die Argument

Premise 1: God is eternal (i.e. has no beginning or end).

Premise 2: An eternal being cannot come to an end.

Premise 3: Dying means coming to an end.

Conclusion: God cannot die.

This is a false argument due to premise 3. Being God, Jesus did *not* 'come to an end' after he died. He was quickened in the spirit, straightway descending into hell to preach to the spirits in prison (cf. Ep. 4.9, I Pt. 3.18-20).

III) God Cannot Be Born Argument

Premise 1: God is eternal (i.e. no beginning or end).

Premise 2: An eternal being cannot have a beginning.

Premise 3: Being born means having a beginning.

Conclusion: God cannot be born.

Similarly, premise 3 invalidates this and is answered *precisely by the incarnation*. Jesus is eternal, made manifest in the flesh through birth in a human body (Ex. 24.10, Js. 5.13-16, Is. 7.14, 9.6, Lk. 1.35; 2.7,11, I Tm. 3.16).

IV) God's Divine Attributes Argument

Premise 1: God cannot do anything that would contradict His divine attributes.

Premise 2: Forgetting, sleeping, repenting, growing and eating are activities that contradict God's divine attributes.

Premise 3: Jesus ate food.

Conclusion: Jesus could not have been God.

As a mix of false and true statements, Premise 2 is falsified. God certainly can never repent⁵, however, the incarnation proves he can eat, sleep and grow (as a human).

I-III are really subsets of IV and all boil down to circular reasoning; Dr. Philips simply stating the incarnation is 'absurd'.

A final try is made with a variant on argument III:

V) Self-Creation Argument

Premise 1: God cannot be created.

Premise 2: God's creation has been created.

Premise 3: God becoming man means becoming His creation.

Conclusion: God has been created.

This is the poorest attempt. Seeing God already existed *before* creating, premises 3 and 2 are unrelated. What God chooses to do *after* the fact can never make Him uncreated.

The last chapter, “Did God have a Son” is a repeat of argument IV above, using a straw man of anthropomorphism regarding God physically begetting. This is the same mistake the author of the Qur'an makes in Surah 19.92 where he implies God produced a son (via union with Mary). The Christian claim of an Eternal Son is obvious from the Bible and is something Allah should have understood so he wouldn't be wasting time attempting to discredit something no true Christian believes:

“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” John 17.5, AV

Apart from final repeated admonitions to discourage believe in the Son of God, Dr. Philips mentions salvation: it has a foundation, excluded beliefs and a key. The key turns out to be *attainment* through 'living a righteous life based on the correct belief'. Salvation can never be 'attained':

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.” Romans 3.20, AV

¹Such a design would mean it is impossible for atheists to 'convert', which is clearly falsified seeing many do. Epileptic (i.e. theist proxy!) and 'normal' (i.e. atheists) people formed the sample groups.

²On p.23 Dr. Philips states oil was created “millions of years by geological processes”. Surat 7.54, 10.3 even state the heaven and the earth were created in six days.

³The Arabs peoples from which Muhammad sprang were polytheists so it would seem unfair to single out Hindus for their polytheism.

⁴This and most of the Hindu theology seems to be copied from Keith

Crim's *Perennial Dictionary of World Religions*. The connection between Philo, an apostate Jew in Alexandria and the Jewish Apostle John 500km away in Jerusalem is not explained.

⁵In this context meaning seek forgiveness of sin, not change His mind.